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Arrests Put Big Parties Back In Spotlight

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FARMINGTON -- Local police are alarmed at the number of recent parties and arrests for underage drinking and illicit drug use.

The latest incident involved 12 people, ranging in age from 17 to 20, who were arrested on a variety of charges including possession of alcohol by underage drinkers and possession of marijuana and cocaine early Sunday at a Unionville home.

In January, a birthday beer bash at a Devonwood home led to the conviction of a mother and father who hosted the event, which drew dozens of underage drinkers.

In October, police were back at the address for another party and made two arrests for underage drinking.

This weekend, police went to 86 Webster St. in response to a report about a noisy party.

Police spokesman Sgt. Dan Devine said officers arrived about 12:30 a.m. and saw underage youths drinking alcohol.

Confronted by authorities, several revelers admitted hosting the event, Devine said. Inside, police found about 25 more partygoers hiding in the basement, he said. Police also found several knives - none of them illegal - inside the residence.

Police said cocaine and marijuana found at the party cements the link between underage drinking and experimenting with drugs. But the presence of knives at an event where drugs and alcohol were being consumed is particularly worrisome, authorities said.

"It's just a matter of time before one of these parties goes seriously wrong," Devine said, noting the fatal stabbing late Friday of a 17-year-old at a party in East Hartford.

Police said four of those arrested in Farmington are charged with hosting the underage event and with illegal possession of alcohol.

Ryan P. Roche, 19, who lives at the house where the party was held, Joseph Damico, 19, and James Damico, 18, both of 38 Carriage Drive in Farmington, and Luke Troxler, 20, of 24 Fawn Drive, were also charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

Roche also was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, authorities said.

In addition, Daniel R. Gay, 19, of 127 Perry St., was charged with cocaine possession, police said.

All five were released on bail pending a court appearance Wednesday to face the charges.

Police said seven other local teenagers were issued summonses for violating a town ordinance banning possession of alcohol by underage drinkers: Adam E. Bonati, 18, of 4 Chestnut Lane; Stefan Burzynski, 18, of 323 Timberline Drive; Dave Decelles, 18, of 19 Sunset Drive; Gavin L. Frechette, 18, of 40 Webster St.; Branden Postl, 19, of 160 West Avon Road; and Patrick A. Ward, 18, of 571 Plainville Ave.

A 17-year-old male, who was not identified because of his age, was ticketed for alcohol possession, police said. Investigators said none of those arrested are currently enrolled in Farmington schools.

Devine also said Monday that police will step up enforcement of drunken-driving laws during the Thanksgiving holiday. They also warned residents returning home from college to be mindful of local ordinances against underage drinking.

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